

and they are joined in their work by Americans of all faiths.

Your Holiness, every American welcomes you and hopes that you will come to see us again. I am nowhere near as gifted a linguist as you are, Holy Father, but as they say in your native Poland: *Sto lat i wiecej*—may you live 100 years and more. And may you keep working and teaching and lighting the way, for all of us and all the world.

Welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. at the Missouri Air National Guard Hangar. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Justine Rigali of St. Louis; Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo of the Holy See; Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; St. Louis County Executive George Westfall; U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See/Vatican City Corinne Claiborne Boggs. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Pope John Paul II.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Pope John Paul II in St. Louis

January 26, 1999

Q. Mr. President, are there any thoughts you'd care to share with us, now, as you sit down with the Holy Father?

The President. Well, we have a lot of things to discuss, so I'm looking forward to it. We're going to talk about many places in the world, and I'm anxious to hear his thoughts on his recent trip to Mexico. And then I expect we'll go through a lot of other hot spots in the world.

Q. How has his advice affected your decisions so far in your Presidency?

The President. He reminds us to think of the people, not just the governments of other countries but the people of other countries. And that's an important thing for an American President to keep in mind.

Press aide. Thank you, pool. To your left, please. We have another wave.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

The President. I think the Church should buy the company producing the film, and you could fund all the Catholic charities all over

the world with it. We could sell all the film the photographers use. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:28 p.m. at the Air National Guard Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Social Security and Medicare

January 27, 1999

The President. Thank you, and good morning. The Vice President and I are delighted to welcome you here. We have an unusually large delegation from the United States Congress here today, and I believe I have all their names, and I would like to acknowledge Senator Thomas and Representatives Becerra, Bliley, Borski, Cardin, Hill, Nadler, Pickering, Portman, Pomeroy, Markey, Smith, and Tauscher. I think I have got them all. And give them a hand. [Applause] I think that's amazing that they're here.

I would like to thank Secretary Shalala, Social Security Commissioner Apfel, and Gene Sperling for their work on this meeting today. I'd like to thank our panelists Laura Tyson, Uwe Reinhardt, Martha McSteen, Hans Riemer, and Stuart Altman for their presence. And they will be introduced in a few moments.

In my State of the Union Address last week, I challenged Congress and the American people to meet the long-term challenges our country faces for the 21st century. Today you all know we are here to talk about perhaps the largest of those, the aging of America.

The number of elderly Americans will double by 2030. Thanks to medical advances, by the middle of the next century, the average American will live to be 82—6 years longer than today. These extra years of life are a great gift, but they do present a problem for Social Security, for Medicare, for how we will manage the whole nature of our society.

As I have said repeatedly, this is a high-class problem, and the older I get the better it looks. [Laughter] But it is one, nonetheless, that we have to face. Fortunately, we are in a strong position to act because of our prosperity and our budget surplus.